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2a. Mother and Son



2b. A Mala Untouchable.



2c. A Madiga Untouchable



2d. Village Barber.

[Facing p. 17]

THE SETTING

resent this disability, but nevertheless they recognize the value of 564 realizing their own limitations and continue to conform to the 783 traditional norms of behaviour.

The people of Telangana and Andhra-desa belong to the great [97] family of Dravidian-speaking people who developed a great 144 civilization in the south and have materially contributed to the final make-up of Indian civilization as we know it to-day. Racially they represent a mixture of several elements. In physical types also the people of Shamirpet show great variation. Most of the Muslim inhabitants of Shamirpet are the descendants of local converts and do not therefore greatly differ in physical characteristics from the local Hindu inhabitants, but the few immigrants whose arrival dates from recent times present a marked contrast with their more delicate features and fairer skin colour.

In point of dress and ornament the Hindus and Muslims differ 291 ● widely. Muslim men and boys wear loose trousers of thin white cloth called *pyjama*, and a vest or a shirt. Out of doors they put on the more conventional long coat buttoned up to the neck known as *sherwani*. They invariably wear a red fez cap or a black cap made of sheepskin. Muslim girls wear a tight *pyjama* and a long, loose tunic which often touches the knees. Round the shoulders and thrown round the back they wear a thin white or coloured scarf known as *dupatta* or *odhni*. On festive occasions these clothes are very colourful. Married Muslim women usually wear a blouse or bodice, and a *sari*—a wide piece of cloth, some five or six yards long, which is tied round the waist to form a skirt that nearly touches the ankles. It is tied in such a way that one end of the cloth is taken over the chest to one shoulder and then passed behind the neck to the other shoulder. Married Muslim women are 562] obliged by the rules of their religion to observe *pardah*, i.e. veil themselves in the presence of all but their closest relations. Whenever they leave their houses they wear this veil known as *burkha*, a garment which falls from the crown of the head to the ground. The Hindu mode of dress is quite different, and varies greatly according to the financial status of the different families. Among the poorer classes, infants remain naked, but occasionally a few rags are tied round their waists; and in childhood they go about in these tattered rags. Boys wear a vest or shirt and a *dhoti*. Girls wear a skirt (*lahanga*) and a blouse. Among the poorer classes these clothes are almost always dirty, for within a few days of their

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291 purchase they lose their new look; and although they are periodically washed, soap or soda-ash is rarely used and consequently they appear to be stained and soiled. In families which are financially better placed, and among those who have received some degree of education or who have been influenced by urban friends and relations, the children's clothing is markedly superior in quality and cleanliness. Boys wear shirts cut in modern style and *dhotis* or occasionally *pyjama*. Girls wear either a blouse and skirt or frocks bought ready-made from the city stores or made by the local tailor. Men wear a vest or shirt and a *dhoti*. Influential and well-to-do persons put on a coat when leaving their houses, particularly when going to the city. Women wear a *sari* and a bodice, the latter invariably embroidered. The favourite colours of the women in the countryside appear to be the deeper shades of red, yellow and green. The village shepherds have a distinctive dress. When they go out to graze their herds of goats and sheep they always have a locally made black blanket on their shoulders, even in the hottest season.

301 The people of Telangana, particularly the women, are extremely fond of ornaments. The commonest types are those made of metal which include ear-plugs and ear-rings, nose-pins and nose-rings, rings worn on the fingers and toes, bracelets, anklets, several types of light and heavy necklaces and belts worn round the waist. Among well-to-do people ear and nose ornaments as well as necklaces are generally made of gold; the rest of a woman's ornaments are of silver. However, very few people can afford ornaments of a metal as expensive as gold, and most people have a few silver pieces, the rest of their ornaments being made of cheaper metals and alloys. In addition to the metal jewellery all Hindu women except widows wear a number of glass bangles on the wrists. The Muslim women's choice of ornament differs from that of their Hindu neighbours, and such jewellery as they wear often comes from the shops in the city and is not made according to the designs of the local goldsmith.

3. THE VILLAGE

173 Shamirpet cannot claim to be a village of any great age. No historical records relating to the actual founding of the village are available, but the elderly people have some information regarding

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4. Men Making Stakes.

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SOCIAL STRUCTURE

614 sexual union of any type between the two is regarded as a kind of incest. It has already been pointed out that these units have no functions beyond those mentioned above and have no common organization, authority or ceremonial distinctively belonging to them.

564 Although in general we can regard Shamirpet as fairly representative of Telangana villages, some Telugu-speaking castes which play an important part in rural Telangana are not to be found in the village; and it will be perhaps advantageous to make a passing reference to some of these castes here. The Velma are a rich agricultural caste more or less equal in status to the Reddis. The Kamma are another caste of the Kapu group who inter-dine with the Reddi, but they are regarded as equals of the lower clean caste groups. The Balja traders are Shaivite Hindus whose status is regarded as being a little higher than that of the Komti. The Gandla works the oil press, and his status is similar to that of the Sale and the Gaondla. The Yenadi, who in some parts of Telangana act as village guards, are in status equal to the Erkala. The Lambada provide a colourful though somewhat alien element in the population of Telangana. In language, dress and ornament they stand out from the rest of the people of Telangana. Their northern origin is clear both from their physical appearance and from their language. The dress of the Lambada woman is picturesque. Her multi-coloured skirt (*lahanga*), tight bodice (*choli*) and upper covering (*odhni*) are elaborately embroidered and worked with appliquéd mirror. Her ornaments are heavy and distinctive, and their tinkling sound lends an air of romance to the dusty roads of the countryside. There is a Lambada settlement some six miles from Shamirpet and they are a common sight on the nearby road.

564 Mention should also be made of three wandering caste groups—
166 the Balsantanam, the Sharda-galu and the Dasari. The Balsan-
463 tanam live in small, low, portable huts and move from village to village. They weave mats, sing songs and legends, and beg from village cultivators. The Sharda-galu are professional story-tellers and earn their livelihood by reciting the legends of their vast repertoire. Similarly, the Dasari are country dramatists who contribute towards the entertainment of the villagers by performing folk plays. Members of many of the castes mentioned above make occasional appearances in Shamirpet.

LIVING TOGETHER

864 point of rubbing genital organs. Girls masturbate either by pressing and releasing their clitoris with their fingers or by rubbing their thighs. Obscenity and talk about sex are disapproved by the elders, but the boys regard it as a mark of toughness and as an indication of their grown-up status, and as such indulge in it fairly regularly. Their vocabulary of abuse includes all the major sexual words, and they can often be heard abusing each other in terms such as: 'Copulate with your mother', 'Cohabit with your sister', 'My penis!'—or the rather curious 'Your mother's penis'.

867 Most children's games involve competition in the use of skills and stamina. The children are divided into several groups and factions, and these often come into conflict on account of intense jealousies and rivalries. Elaborate group *mores* and codes of ethics govern their inter-relations during states of friendship, neutrality and enmity. Toughness in boys is the admired quality; weakness, refined ways, spying and complaining coming in for criticism and ridicule. Running away from fright, crying and treachery to the group are remembered long after the quarrels and restoration of peace between conflicting factions. Outside the play-group the growing children have to lend a helping hand to their parents.

883 Grown-up girls assist their mothers at their domestic tasks and take partial charge of their younger siblings, while boys do odd jobs for the father and other older male relatives. It is now time that they should take their first steps in preparing for adult life.

882 Adolescence brings about a significant change in the life of both boys and girls. By this age girls are expected to become proficient in all the major domestic tasks. Negotiations for their marriage are invariably started at this age. They grow up faster than the boys. While boys of a comparable age are still regarded as 'grown-up children who do not understand', girls come to be looked upon more or less as fully-grown women. Now they must be careful about their dress; particularly their breasts should never be exposed. They should 'not run about the village like boys', nor should they talk or laugh so loudly as to attract notice. Mothers advise them to be cautious in their behaviour, for this is the age when young people start giving attention to them. Young people have a special fascination for adolescent girls 'whose youth is just beginning to blossom'. Young men succeeding in fondling 'the unripe, half-developed breasts' of a girl and in having intercourse with one 'whose pubic hair is just beginning to grow' easily win the

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[654] practices or with their methods of cattle keeping. Compulsory vaccination and inoculation were introduced. The village people did not clearly understand the implications of the political movements that were developing in the city. The Muslims, thinking that they belonged to the 'ruling race', supported the Nizam and later the communalist Muslim party. The educated and city-influenced Hindus had sympathy with the Arya Samaj (a Hindu revivalist and reformist body), and the State Congress (a democratic political party affiliated to the Indian National Congress and dedicated to the ideal of self-government and democracy within the State), but could not express their sympathies openly. At least outwardly the landed Hindu peasantry maintained a loyalist attitude towards the established authority. These were the major influences that operated in the community. Nearly all of them had a slow and uncertain start, but gradually their intensity and effectiveness increased. As an outcome of their operation, at the close of the Jagir period, we get a picture of the village which is very different from the one that it would have presented in the pre- or early-Jagir period.

What then are the main lines of variation? In what spheres of community life are the changes most pronounced? As we find them most pronounced in material culture and technology, it would be appropriate to begin our analysis of change with this aspect of life. These changes have resulted in the acquisition of new habits and styles, of new tools and technological processes, and of a new outlook on things in general.

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178 In the dress and ornaments of the village people there has been very noticeable change. The old-style peasant dress is now giving way to new-style clothes cut and stitched in imitation of the urban style. While it is still common to see an Indian lower garment—Hindu *dhoti* or Muslim *pyjama*—Western-style shirts with collars have mostly replaced the native upper garments. In the former times only the village headman, rich Reddis and Muslims, and the high-caste Brahmins and Komtis wore 'respectable' and semi-urban clothing, and that too only when they were to receive an important visitor or while going to the city. With the exception of this small minority, all others wore the traditional peasant dress. Spinning was done on the hand-wheel at home and cloth was woven by village weavers. Now the situation has changed. At present hardly any spinning is being done by the people, and the village weaver buys his yarn from the 218 shops in the city.

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buys his yarn from the shops in the city. The clothing to-day can be classified into three main types: the average peasant dress, the old-style respectable dress, and the new-style clothing. In all the three types of clothes mill-made cloth is extensively used. For shirts and vests practically everyone uses mill-made cloth. The same is true of materials used for the bodices and blouses of women. Before the Second World War mill-made women's *saris* were capturing the village markets, and were making the position rather difficult for the village weaver who was unable to withstand this competition. However, due to acute war-time shortages, particularly of *saris*, there was a switch back to the locally woven material. In the three styles of clothing enumerated above, those adopting the new are imitating the current urban styles. In these two different trends can be observed: Indian clothing and semi-Indian clothing. Most people in this group are young men. During the Muslim régime they had taken to *pyjama* (thin white trousers) and *sherwani* (long, buttoned-up-to-the-neck coats) which were then extremely popular. The *kurta*—long loose tunic popularized by the Congress in the civil disobedience days—became a mark of patriotism and is currently the accepted respectable dress with young men. It can be worn with both *dhoti* and *pyjama*. Shirts with collars, shorts and European-style jackets were also used by this section. Knitted vests too became very popular. Items of clothing introduced more recently are trousers and bush-jackets. These are confined mostly to people who have served in the Hyderabad Army or who have had some small jobs in the city. In the old-style respectable dress not much change is in evidence. During the Muslim régime the clothing of the respectable people had acquired a definite court touch, and a long coat and lambskin cap became the dress of the respectable city-going village people. With the decline of Muslim rule in Hyderabad this cap was discarded by the Hindus as it symbolized their subordination to the Muslims. It has been replaced by an ordinary black cap, and the traditional long coat is still in use. The average peasants' and workers' dress has not changed much, but it is now made of mill-cloth. Many of the agriculturists and artisans, and indeed some poorer people, buy shirts with collars, and coats, to wear on special occasions. Among women brightly coloured and gaudily printed clothes have become popular. City manufactured trinkets are eagerly bought by them. Bangles, which every Hindu woman whose

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301 husband is alive must wear, were formerly made by one of the
 178 local castes from indigenous materials. Now factory-made glass
 ● 291 bangles have captured the market almost completely. Children's
 178 dresses are now generally of Western style. Frocks, rompers,
 shirts and shorts are bought for them from the local market or
 from the shops in the city. Among other items of everyday wear
 Western-style shoes with laces are now being used alongside
 country shoes and sandals.

178 To the list of articles of daily requirement there have been several
 415 significant additions. Aluminium and 'German silver' utensils
 became very popular with the poorer sections of the population
 on account of their low prices. Glasses, as well as china cups and
 saucers, could be seen in several homes. Besides the public build-
 ings five private homes now possess wall or alarm clock. Kero-
 sene lanterns can be seen in several homes, and there are five
 kerosene pressure lamps in the village. Some old people use read-
 ing glasses, and more than half a dozen young men from the
 village have bought sun glasses. Several people in the village use
 safety razors and torches. Cheap fountain-pens are also very
 fashionable.

178 In the food habits of the people there has not been much change.
 262 Sweets and other dainty eatables are bought from the shops
 in the city or from the bazaar. Five small stores in the village sell,
 among other things, lozenges, fruit-drops and biscuits made in
 Hyderabad. Tea and coffee are also very popular. Even those who
 do not drink these beverages regularly at home, occasionally have
 them in the village shop ostentatiously known as the 'hotel'.
 Aerated waters enjoy an amazing popularity as they are believed
 [276] to provide relief from many stomach disorders. The cigarette
 factories at Hyderabad have been producing and popularizing
 cheap brands of cigarettes, which have been progressively replac-
 ing the country cigarettes in which tobacco is rolled in dried
 leaves. Along with fermented palm-juice, some people now drink
 other liquors supplied by distilleries in Hyderabad.

178 Side by side with the traditional recreations of gossip, loafing
 and playing indigenous games, several new varieties of entertain-
 ments are now available to the village people. The village has three
 [524] gramophones. In the tea shop there is a crystal radio. Some young
 [546] men in the village play volley-ball. Many people patronize the
 circus and cinema in the city.

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medicines and injections. The old beliefs and practices survive, partly because of the non-availability of quick and efficient modern treatment, and partly also because of its prohibitive cost. Besides the two systems do not conflict, and in order to be doubly sure, most people continue magico-religious practices along with modern medicinal treatment. Adoption of several new tools and instruments for occupational work, as well as of several other items of Western technology, such as buses, railways, razors, and electric torches, introduced in the comparatively recent times is due to their efficiency and utility. In the matter of dress and ornament other factors must also be taken into account. Mill-made cloth was not regarded only as cheap and more durable; it came to be looked upon as more respectable also. The coarse handloom cloth was regarded as rustic, the finer mill-cloth, on the other hand, was more refined and dignified. Further, mill-made cloth allowed a wider range of choice in the matter of colours, designs and patterns. The style of dress was influenced by a variety of factors. Under Muslim rule the style of dress of the rulers became fashionable. With Congress in power there was a sudden switch from the Muslim court-dress to Congress-patronized national dress. Modern Indian—as well as Western-style clothes—cigarettes, sun-glasses and tea are not only popular because of their utility, they possess a great prestige value as well.

Influence of the city has brought about adjustment and modification in several spheres, but the need of balancing different extremes in the organization of the community has so far prevented any drastic structural change in village communities. Under the impact of the new socio-economic factors the family ties have weakened, the kin-group has lost some of its characteristic strength and in the system of status evaluation achieved-status is competing with traditionally ascribed status; but the society still continues to be caste-structured as caste plays a vital role in its social, economic and ritual organization. Democracy has brought in its wake party organization and elections which demand group formation and group allegiance: in several rural areas no new groups have emerged, the loyalties of the people have only been re-affirmed to the pre-existing caste groups. While no important social or economic projects and reforms have so far been put into operation, the first major political change—the

25: Whitehead M-3 (no date) 1921

AWI India
TEJES AM7

PLATE VII



BUFFALO SACRIFICE

[Facing p. 50]

25: Whitehead

M-3 (no date) 1921

AW1 India
TELUGU AW17

PLATE VIII

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HEAD OF SACRIFICIAL BUFFALO

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